

Application No. 10/814,009
Amendment dated January 20, 2006
Reply to Office Action of June 21, 2005

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A mower according to claim 11; and A pull-behind mower for cutting ground vegetation, said mower configured to be pulled behind a vehicle and powered independently of the vehicle, said mower comprising:

a frame presenting a fore end and an aft end;

a hitch coupled to the fore end and configured to releasably couple the frame to the vehicle in a manner that permits pivoting of the frame relative to the vehicle;

a pair of laterally spaced wheels coupled to the aft end and adapted to rollingly support the frame on the ground;

a mowing deck operable to cut vegetation when positioned proximate the ground;

a support arm comprising a frame-side section rotatably coupled to the frame and a deck-side section rigidly coupled to the deck, said frame-side and deck-side sections being hingedly intercoupled;

a motor rigidly coupled to the frame and drivingly connected to the deck, so as to power the deck independently of the vehicle; and

a drive train for transferring power from the motor to the deck,

said drive train including a first rotatable drive shaft, a second rotatable drive shaft, and a U-joint coupled between the first and second drive shafts.

13. (Original) A mower according to claim 12,
said support arm permitting pivoting of the deck relative to the frame on first and second distinct and intersecting pivot axes,

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said U-joint being centered proximate the intersection of the first and second pivot axes.

14. (Currently Amended) A mower according to claim [[11]] 12,
said frame-side section being rotatable relative to the frame on a first pivot axis,
said frame-side and deck-side sections being hingedly intercoupled on a second pivot axes,
said first and second pivot axes being substantially perpendicular to one another.

15. (Original) A mower according to claim 14,
said first and second pivot axes intersecting one another.

16. (Original) A mower according to claim 15,
said first pivot axis being generally upright.

17-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A mower according to claim [[24]] 27,
said support arm permitting pivoting of the deck relative to the frame on the first and second
distinct and intersecting pivot axes,
said U-joint being centered proximate the intersection of the first and second pivot axes.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently Amended) A mower according to claim [[26]] 30,
said first and second pivot axes intersecting one another.

28-29. (Canceled)

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30. (Currently Amended) A mower according to claim 29, A pull-behind mower for cutting ground vegetation, said mower configured to be pulled behind a vehicle, said mower comprising:

a frame presenting a fore end and an aft end;

a hitch coupled to the fore end and configured to releasably couple the frame to the vehicle in a manner that permits pivoting of the frame relative to the vehicle;

a pair of laterally spaced wheels coupled to the aft end and adapted to rollingly support the frame on the ground;

a mowing deck operable to cut vegetation when positioned proximate the ground;

a support arm comprising a frame-side section rotatably coupled to the frame and a deck-side section rigidly coupled to the deck, said frame-side and deck-side sections being hingedly intercoupled;

a motor for powering the deck;

a drive train for transferring power from the motor to the deck,

said drive train including a first rotatable drive shaft, a second rotatable drive shaft, and a U-joint coupled between the first and second drive shafts,

said frame-side section being rotatable relative to the frame on a first pivot axis,

said frame-side and deck-side sections being hingedly intercoupled on a second pivot axes,

said first and second pivot axes being substantially perpendicular to one another,

said first pivot axis being generally upright; and

a mechanism operable to inhibit pivoting of the deck on the second pivot axis;

said mechanism being operable to selectively inhibit downward pivoting of the deck on the second pivot axis.

31. (Original) A mower according to claim 30,
said mechanism comprising a cable coupled to the frame and the deck.

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32. (Currently Amended) A mower according to claim 24, A pull-behind mower for cutting ground vegetation, said mower configured to be pulled behind a vehicle, said mower comprising:

a frame presenting a fore end and an aft end;

a hitch coupled to the fore end and configured to releasably couple the frame to the vehicle in a manner that permits pivoting of the frame relative to the vehicle;

a pair of laterally spaced wheels coupled to the aft end and adapted to rollingly support the frame on the ground;

a mowing deck operable to cut vegetation when positioned proximate the ground;

a support arm comprising a frame-side section rotatably coupled to the frame and a deck-side section rigidly coupled to the deck, said frame-side and deck-side sections being hingedly intercoupled;

a motor for powering the deck; and

a drive train for transferring power from the motor to the deck;

said drive train including a first rotatable drive shaft, a second rotatable drive shaft, and a U-joint coupled between the first and second drive shafts,

said motor being rigidly coupled to the frame so as to power the deck independently of the vehicle.

33. (Original) A mower according to claim 32,
said motor being a gas-powered motor.

34. (Currently Amended) A mower according to claim [[1]] 12,
said motor being a gas-powered motor.

35. (Currently Amended) A mower according to claim [[4]] 14,
a mechanism operable to inhibit pivoting of the deck on the second pivot axis.

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36. (Currently Amended) A mower according to claim 35, A pull-behind mower for cutting ground vegetation, said mower comprising:

a frame adapted to be coupled to a vehicle and rollingly supported on the ground;
a motor rigidly coupled to the frame;
a mowing deck coupled to the frame for pivotal movement relative to the frame on first and second intersecting pivot axes;
a drive train for drivingly coupling the motor to the deck so that the motor powers the deck;
said drive train including a first rotatable drive shaft, a second rotatable drive shaft, and a U-joint coupled between the first and second drive shafts for rotation therewith,
said U-joint being centered proximate the intersection of the first and second pivot axes,
said deck being pivotable relative to the frame on the first pivot axis between a retracted position and an extended position,
said deck being pivotable relative to the frame on the second pivot axis between an engaged position and a disengaged position,
said first and second pivot axes being at least substantially perpendicular to one another,
said first pivot axis being generally upright; and
a mechanism operable to inhibit pivoting of the deck on the second pivot axis; and
said mechanism being operable to selectively inhibit downward pivoting of the deck on the second pivot axis.

37. (Original) A mower according to claim 36,
said mechanism comprising a cable coupled to the frame and the deck.

38. (Canceled)

39. (Currently Amended) A mower according to claim [[1]] 12,
said U-joint being a Hooke's joint.

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40. (Canceled)

41. (Currently Amended) A mower according to claim [[24]] 30,
said U-joint being a Hooke's joint.